The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

~~forming an amorphous semiconductor film over a substrate;~~

processing a laser beam outputted from a laser oscillator in order to shape a beam spot into a linear shape or an elliptical shape ~~on the amorphous semiconductor film~~;

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam;

transmitting [[the]] a laser beam having a polarized direction through an optical system ~~that has a transmittance dependent on a~~ depending on the polarization direction after controlling the branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam;

deflecting the transmitted laser beam toward [[the]] a surface ~~to be irradiated~~ of a semiconductor film;

shaping the beam spot at arbitrary coordinates on the surface to be irradiated; and

performing laser annealing on the ~~amorphous~~ semiconductor film,

wherein the control of the branching ratio of polarization offsets a beam energy change associated with a position on the surface irradiated by the beam.

23. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave solid state laser.

24. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser oscillator is a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

25. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 23, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

26. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave Ar laser or a continuous wave Kr laser.

27. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

28. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 25, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

29. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 26, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

30.-60. (Canceled)

61. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein a half wave plate is rotated to control the branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam.

62. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the optical system comprises a beam splitter.

63. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 62, wherein the beam splitter selectively transmits p-polarized laser beam or s-polarized laser beam.

64. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the step of deflecting is performed using a galvanometer mirror.

65. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

processing a laser beam outputted from a laser oscillator in order to shape a beam spot into a linear shape or an elliptical shape;

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam;

transmitting a laser beam having a polarized direction through an optical system depending on the polarization direction after controlling the branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam;

deflecting the transmitted laser beam toward a surface of a semiconductor film; and

scanning the deflected laser beam through an f-θ lens to the semiconductor film,

wherein the control of the branching ratio of polarization offsets a difference in beam energy distribution associated with the scanning of the deflected laser beam on the surface of the semiconductor film.

66. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave solid state laser.

67. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein the laser oscillator is a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

68. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

69. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave Ar laser or a continuous wave Kr laser.

70. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

71. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 68, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

72. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 69, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

73. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein a half wave plate is rotated to control the branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam.

74. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein the optical system comprises a beam splitter.

75. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 74, wherein the beam splitter selectively transmits p-polarized laser beam or s-polarized laser beam.

76. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 65, wherein the steps of deflecting and scanning are performed using a galvanometer mirror.

77. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

processing a laser beam outputted from a laser oscillator in order to shape a beam spot into a linear shape or an elliptical shape;

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam;

transmitting a laser beam having a polarized direction through an optical system depending on the polarization direction after controlling the branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam;

deflecting the transmitted laser beam toward a surface of a semiconductor film; and

scanning the deflected laser beam through an f-θ lens to the semiconductor film,

wherein the control of the branching ratio of polarization offsets a difference in beam energy distribution, the difference being caused by a position of the laser beam incident on the f-θ lens.

78. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave solid state laser.

79. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein the laser oscillator is a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

80. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

81. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave Ar laser or a continuous wave Kr laser.

82. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

83. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 80, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

84. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 81, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

85. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein a half wave plate is rotated to control the branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam.

86. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein the optical system comprises a beam splitter.

87. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 86, wherein the beam splitter selectively transmits p-polarized laser beam or s-polarized laser beam.

88. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 77, wherein the steps of deflecting and scanning are performed using a galvanometer mirror.